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## DETACHED SEAS.

WE all are familiar with the grand distinction between the sea and lakes—namely, the one being composed of salt, the other of fresh water. We experience, however, some surprise on learning that there are many detached sheets of water throughout the earth, some of them reaching the magnitude of inland seas, which, though having no apparent connection with the ocean, are composed of salt water. The grandest example is the Caspian, which covers 36,000 square English miles. The instance, for various reasons, most interesting to us is the Dead Sea in Palestine. The saline contents of the former are said to be 'inconsiderable'; but those of the Dead Sea greatly exceed the proportion general throughout the ocean, being 26·24 per cent.\* There is also to the northward and eastward of the Caspian a great range of salt lakes, one of which, the lake of Eltonsk, contains no less than 29·13 per cent. of salts. In this range occurs the sea or Lake of Aral, likewise brackish, and resting in the same hollow which contains the Caspian, but not connected with it. In point of size, these detached seas are rivalled by the grand lakes of North America. Their saline character—a peculiarity evidently connected with their having no outlet—gives them, however, a distinction in virtue of which they more forcibly arrest attention.

The natural and proper condition of water is *freshness*—the state in which it falls from the clouds. It is by accident that it acquires the saline or any other impregnation. This is indicated, if it were by nothing else, in the varying degree of the saltiness even in the ocean; for the sea is saltiest between the tropics, where the evaporation is greatest, and least salt at the poles, owing to the infusion of the melted ice. We need not, therefore, be surprised at finding that the detached seas and salt lakes are of a different degree of saltiness from the mean of the ocean, or that they are different among themselves. It is surprising, however, to find so heavy a charge of this article in the Dead Sea as one-fourth of its whole mass. So extraordinary a fact was sure to excite great attention in early ages, though, as we now see, it is out-paralleled in the Lake of Eltonsk. Travellers tell that they have been able to discover no trace of animal life in the Dead Sea. They find themselves so buoyant in it, owing to its great specific gravity, that they can scarcely swim, it being difficult to keep both arms and legs under the surface at once. The skin smarts from the contact of the waters, and they come out with a sensible incrustation of salt all over. The stories told, however, of birds not being able to fly over the lake, owing to the fumes arising from it, are of the class of imaginary tales engendered by marvellous ap-

pearances. Sulphur and asphalt or bitumen are among the foreign substances contained in the water of the Dead Sea. The Caspian, in like manner, presents upon its western banks springs of naphtha. All of these are simple natural circumstances, easily to be accounted for by the character of the country drained into these detached seas.

Till no distant period, it was supposed that there was a subterranean communication between the Caspian and the Black Sea, forming a secret outlet for the large quantities of water brought into the former by the Wolga and other rivers. As evidence in favour of this supposition, it was observed that the sea-calves, dolphins, and other marine mammalia of the Mediterranean and Black Sea, were identical in species with those found in the Caspian. It was thought that these animals had found their way into the Caspian through the subterranean passages. Such notions are now wholly given up by men of science.

It has long been known, however, that the Caspian stands at a lower level than the ocean. Halley, the English astronomer of the reign of Charles II., speculated upon the depression in which it rests having been produced by the stroke of a comet. When, about 1732, some barometrical observations indicated its being fully 300 feet below the ocean level, the idea was put aside as 'evidently absurd'; but, some years afterwards, other observers finding reason to come to the same conclusion, it began to be the subject of serious inquiry. After many experiments by different persons, most of which came to widely different results, the depression of the Caspian below the level of the sea was ascertained by levelling in 1837 to be about 83 or 84 feet. This is a very remarkable fact, from its being of a nature not previously imagined as possible. But it is not alone the area of the Caspian which is concerned. The eastern and northern shores being almost level for a large space, it appears, from a calculation of Baron Humboldt, that the extent of continental land depressed below the level of the ocean is not less than 18,000 square marine leagues, being more than the area of France. We are not sure if the baron includes in this calculation the space and precincts of the Lake of Aral, which is now believed to be about the same level with the Caspian, and only divided from it by a very low tract.

Nearly about the same time when the Russian savans were engaged in this investigation, several gentlemen of different countries, almost simultaneously, and quite independently of one another, made the discovery that there was a similar depression in the area of the Dead Sea. One of these gentlemen, Dr Von Schubert, says, in a narrative which he has published—'We were not a little astonished at Jericho, and still more at the Dead Sea, to see the mercury in our barometer ascend beyond the scale. We were obliged to calculate the height by

\* The saline contents of the ocean are from 3 to 4 per cent.

the eye, and although we reduced the height as much as possible, owing to the extremely unexpected nature of the result, yet the level of the Dead Sea, hence deduced, was at least 640 English feet under that of the Mediterranean. We endeavoured to explain away this conclusion in every possible way. . . . I could not have ventured to make public so extraordinary a measurement after my return home, although the measurement of the height of the Lake of Tiberias corresponded with it, had it not been that some of my friends published a notice of it in the "Allgemeine Zeitung." An interest being now excited in the subject, several other measurements were made, but none of a satisfactory nature, till Lieutenant Symonds, in 1841, executed a trigonometrical survey of the space between Jaffa and the Dead Sea, and ascertained the latter to be depressed below the Mediterranean no less than 1311 feet! The area occupied by, and surrounding the famed Asphaltite Lake, including a large portion of the valley of the Jordan—the scene of some of the most remarkable events in history—thus appears to be a kind of pit, for so it may well be called. Even the Lake of Tiberias, seventy miles up the valley of the Jordan, was discovered by Lieutenant Symonds to be 328 feet below the level of the ocean.

From these discoveries, it results that there is no possible means of exit for the waters thrown into the Caspian and Dead Sea besides evaporation. Great as is the volume brought in by the rivers, the sun in those warm latitudes is sufficiently powerful to withdraw it again, thus keeping down the surface at a certain general level, lower than that of the main sea. It is believed that the reason of the saline taste of such isolated masses of water—and in this category the ocean itself might be included—is, as long ago suggested by Buffon, their being the ultimate place of deposit for the particles of salt washed by the rivers out of the land during their courses. A Caspian is, in this respect, to be regarded as a co-ordinate of the great ocean itself, albeit on a comparatively small scale. An English lake which received a rivulet, and had no outlet, would be another example; and even in such a sheet of water a charge of salts would perhaps in time be acquired.

Sir Roderick I. Murchison, in his late laborious work on the Geology of Russia in Europe, describes the character of the great basin occupied by the Aral and Caspian. Excepting a tract (the Ust-Urt) interposed between these seas, which is a plateau of miocene limestone ranging under 731 feet above the level of the Caspian, this large region may be generally described as 'a desiccated sea-bottom . . . entirely composed of sand, with occasional heaps of fine gravel . . . rarely argillaceous and loamy, and almost everywhere strewn over with shells, or the debris of species, some of which are now living in the adjacent Caspian Sea.' This superficial formation rests on the flanks of the miocene limestone of the Ust-Urt, showing that it was deposited in a sea which insulated that district; and this sea appears to have been one precisely resembling the present Caspian, for the fossil shells are wholly of the kinds (*cardium*, *mytilus*, *adacne*, &c.) which live in brackish seas, resembling these also in their being of a very limited number of species, while numerous as individuals; in which respect, it may be remarked, brackish seas differ from ordinary seas where the species are usually of great variety. Sir Roderick, therefore, believes that the great steppe of Astrakhan, and all the rest of that extensive low tract, forming what may be called the Aralo-Caspian basin, was, in comparatively modern geological times, but before the age of history, covered by a brackish sea, forming a sort of inner Mediterranean, and fully equalling that sea in extent. This tract is indeed only saved from being so at this moment by the strength of the evaporative power: were that diminished to any serious extent, the large rivers now flowing into the Aral and Caspian (the Oxus, Jaxartes, Wolga, &c.) would undoubtedly raise a single sheet of water by which this extensive portion of Western Asia would be overflowed. It may be a curious subject of

reflection to the inhabitants of Astrakhan, that their city is only saved from permanent and hopeless inundation by the power of the sun's rays. So equally would this tract become the seat of a prolongation of the Mediterranean, a true saline sea, if the ground intervening between it and the Black Sea or the Sea of Azov, were to be from any cause broken down or lowered.

It becomes an interesting subject of speculation—By what means, and in what circumstances, have the Caspian and Aral been drained or emptied down to their present diminished forms and extent? It is first necessary to keep in view that Caspian shells being found on a sort of under-cliff of the Ust-Urt from 150 to 200 feet above the Aral (which it overlooks), we must presume that the Aralo-Caspian basin had once a greater height of water by at least that amount. The question arises—By what height of country is the Aralo-Caspian basin divided from that of the Black Sea?—the only point in which a connection has been presumed to have existed. We obtain some light on this subject from the observations of Pallas, who describes a cliff like the border of an ancient sea extending between the extremity of the Ural Mountains and a point near the upper extremity of the Sea of Azov: this is said to average about 300 feet of elevation above the Aralo-Caspian basin. It would obviously, if there were no lower point of connection, form a boundary for a lake or detached sea sufficient in height to deposit the shells on the under-cliff overlooking the Aral. We are not so clearly informed as to the height of the ground intervening more directly between the Caspian and Black Sea; but such information is scarcely necessary, as the brackish character established for the ancient Caspian by its shells shows it to have been divided from the Black Sea by a height sufficient to cut off all connection between their respective waters. When we ask more strictly, by what means has the ancient Caspian Sea been reduced? it becomes important to know that there is evidence for the fact, generally believed amongst the neighbouring people, that the waters are continually though slowly diminishing. A small overbalance of the evaporative over the filling power, such as we may believe now exists, would be sufficient, in the course of time, to reduce the great sea of a former age to the present pair of detached lakes.

Sir Roderick I. Murchison, speculating on this subject, says—'Whilst we specially invite attention to the grandeur and peculiarity of this former internal sea, we think that its diminution to the size of the present Caspian and Aral Seas is mainly due to oscillations of its former bottom. The eruptive rocks which range along the Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Balkan of Khwarezm, are fortunately at hand to explain that, as igneous matter in many forms has sought an issue at many points in those contiguous mountains, partially raising up sedimentary deposits, and changing their mineral aspects and condition, so probably have internal widely-acting expansive forces, derived from the same deep-seated source, heaved up, in broad horizontal masses, to the different levels at which we now find them, the beds of the former great Caspian Sea. Such elevations would very naturally, we contend, be accompanied by adjacent depressions; and thus we would explain the low position of the Caspian Sea, and such portions of land about it, as are admitted by all observers to lie beneath the surface of the ocean.'

We must profess ourselves to be at a loss to perceive occasion for such upheavals and depressions of the surface as are here called forth.\* There is nothing in the configuration of the district which we may not suppose to have co-existed with the former

\* The value of Sir Roderick's statement depends altogether upon the character of the 'eruptive rocks.' If these are very modern, as lavas and trachytes, &c.; if they have acted upon the miocene rocks of the district, so as to control and otherwise derange their natural horizontality; or if they have in the least affected the character of the superficial masses containing the shells, then to a certainty volcanic forces have had to do with the severance of the Caspian and Black Sea.—Note by a Friend.

greater height of the Aralo-Caspian Sea, so that only the connection with the Mediterranean basin be higher than the position of the shells so often alluded to—a point upon which we have every reason to conclude affirmatively. Sir Roderick's contending for depressions seems uncalled for, when we consider that there are many lakes deeper than the neighbouring seas, and that in their cases we should equally find a sub-aerial depression, if the evaporative power were only in excess over that by which the lake is fed. The bottom of Loch Ness, for instance, is 700 or 800 feet below the level of the sea. Were it placed in a sufficiently torrid climate, we should have it transformed into a comparatively small salt lake, occupying the bottom of a vale precisely like that of the Jordan and Dead Sea. Lake Superior, in North America, the surface of which is 627 feet above the sea, has a bed 336 feet below that level. Here an increased evaporative power would have exactly the same effect. Such depressions of the surface apart from the bed of the ocean are common: had this been kept in mind, and had the main fact connected with salt lakes been held in view—namely, their issuing in evaporation—such men as Humboldt, Arago, and Murchison could not have failed to see that all recourse to such extraordinary means as upheavals and depressions might have been spared. Such motions of the surface are no doubt amongst the most indubitable of the facts educed by geology from the history of the past; but it was in earlier ages than those of the superficial formations that they were at their maximum of intensity. There has been of late years too great a disposition to resort to them for the explanation of comparatively modern phenomena.

These speculations are not exclusive of the possible connection of the Aralo-Caspian Sea with the Black Sea in an earlier age. It is ascertained of some parts of the earth that the relative level of sea and land has undergone a change to the extent of many hundreds of feet. Suppose this to have been the case also in the confines of Europe and Asia, then the Aralo-Caspian would be an inner Mediterranean, as Murchison calls it, until the waters fell (using this word merely for convenience) below the point where they would join; after which the Aralo-Caspian would be isolated, and its drainage by means of evaporation would commence. The fish of the present Caspian are said to be different as species from those of all other parts of the earth, though denominated sturgeon, salmon, herring, &c.; but the same marine mammalia exist here as in the Black Sea. If we could suppose the differences in the fish to be only such as differences of conditions can in the course of time effect, there would be nothing to prevent our regarding the zoology of the Caspian as an interesting memorial of the former connection of this sea with the ocean.

R. C.

## DASEE LEWELLYN'S WISH.

'Oh, father! how delightful it would be if you were an outlaw, or a rebel, or something of that sort; then I might be like Ellen in the Lady of the Lake: there would be danger and excitement, and daily sacrifices to make for you! Nay, if you were but an old blind harper, papa, I would be content! Leading you over the hills, as in the olden days of chivalry; in lighted halls and Beauty's bowers to be welcomed everywhere.'

Such was the observation made one day by young Dasee Lewellyn, the daughter of a Welsh squire, and my very intimate though eccentric friend—a compound, as I sometimes thought her, of Die Vernon and Anne of Geierstein. I was at the time on a visit to Swan Pool, the picturesque residence of Squire Lewellyn, and though Dasee had often amused me with her flashes of sentiment, I felt that her present wish to see her father either a rebel or a beggar was rather too romantic.

'Thank you, my darling: I am much obliged to you,' said the squire; 'but as we are already welcomed by our

neighbours most heartily, whenever we go amongst them, I much prefer the convenience of a comfortable carriage, with the inestimable blessing of eyesight, to toiling on foot afflicted and wayworn.'

'But,' vehemently urged his daughter, 'then we should be welcomed for the sake of genius and the love of art; now it is because you are the Squire of Swan Pool, and I your heiress, and that we give good dinners in return, and a ball at Christmas!'

'Don't talk any more nonsense, Dasee,' answered her father impatiently. 'I like sentiment well enough, but not sentiment run mad, as yours seems to be. Why don't you take a lesson in common sense from your friend Miss — there;' pointing to me as he said so. 'However, we need not say any more about that just now. So come and kiss me, like a good, sensible girl, and tell me what you think of Mr Smith, our new pastor?'

'Why,' said the 'good, sensible girl,' 'he is a great deal too fat and ruddy for a clergyman, and too young and happy-looking. What with his commonplace name, and commonplace appearance, I can't bear him.'

'But, my dear,' added Dame Winny, the squire's sister and housekeeper, 'a good young pastor, well and conscientiously performing his manifold duties, ought to look happy, if a quiet conscience and peace of mind can give happiness; and as to being ruddy and robust, what fault is that of his? I am sure he is a most excellent young man, and we are very fortunate in having such a successor to our lamented Mr Morgan.'

'I should think we were much more fortunate,' saucily rejoined the foolish, heedless Dasee, 'if Mr Smith had been a Mr anything else, and a pale, interesting, miserable-looking person, whom it would have made me weep to listen to, thinking of the sad tale that doubtless formed his history!'

'Right glad should I be if he had a tale to tell thee, thou foolish Dasee!' said the fond father. 'But if thou art so full of folly, depend upon it that Mr Smith will never think of thee.'

'Mr Smith think of me indeed!' indignantly exclaimed the heiress: 'I would not have him, even if he grew pale, and thin, and elegant to-morrow!'

On my second visit to Swan Pool, Dasee herself reminded me of these words, and also of the following incident, which took place in the churchyard:—

This burial-ground was situated on a hillside facing the lake; ancient trees spread their branches above the grassy mounds, many of which were ornamented with beautiful flowering plants, placed there by the hand of affection, and carefully tended, for the Welsh peasant attaches peculiar interest to these sweet memorials of the departed. It was evening time, and all was hushed around as Dasee Lewellyn and myself sat down to rest on a projecting stone. A woman, clad in mourning garb, entered the churchyard, and, not seeing us, presently knelt down by the side of a newly-made grave, on which the flowers, but lately planted, were struggling to regain elasticity and strength. We saw her tie them up, and pluck off the faded leaves; we heard her deep sobs, and her fervent ejaculations reached our ears. Dasee was very pale, silent, and thoughtful, looking on the mourner with deep interest and absorbing attention; and when at length the poor woman left the burial-place, she arose and sought the new-made grave, with clasped hands and an earnest manner softly exclaiming, 'Oh I wish that I too had a grave to tend!'

Admonition, warning, or reproof was alike useless. We silently left the spot, nor exchanged a word till within the warm cheerful rooms of the old house once more. We found the squire and Dame Winny busily engaged with a disputation at cribbage; but I fancied I guessed Dasee's feelings as she sprang into the arms of these dear ones, embracing them again and again with unwonted demonstrations of affection even for her, warm and affectionate as she ever was. Her heart perhaps smote her, but the idle words could not be recalled.



Our sojourn in the pleasant Welsh valley at length terminated; and many years passed away, bringing changes to us all, while still at intervals of time we continued to receive tidings of our valued friends at Swan Pool.

Dasee's letters were piquant and artless productions, but affording subjects for serious contemplation, as marking the gradual change of disposition wrought by time, change of circumstances, and the development of feelings which had hitherto lain dormant.

With heartfelt sorrow we heard from Dame Winny of the worthy squire's affliction—namely, that he had become a palsied, sightless old man; but then Dame Winny spoke of 'Niece Dasee's beautiful demeanour and dutiful love towards her father;' and we shrewdly opined also that the reverend gentleman of 'the ruddy countenance and odious name' was beginning to find favour with the heiress. She herself wrote to us of his many amiable qualities, of his assiduous attentions towards her poor father, who, from his past habits and pursuits, most bitterly felt his present deplorable condition, so that, when the final news reached us of her princely patronymic being lost for ever in the commonplace one of 'Smith,' we were not much astonished.

After this event our correspondence became irregular. Our wanderings, vicissitudes, and sorrows, and her increasing family, accounted for this; while dear Dame Winny had so much upon her hands, so many calls on her time and attention, that writing, which had always been a laborious task to her, now became an almost impossible one.

Destiny, however, conducted us once more to Lewellyn's home; and at the period of our second visit to Swan Pool, when we gained the summit of the hill, and gazed down on the valley beneath, it might have seemed as if the summer-time of our first visit had come again, only that the summer of the heart had departed, and many wintry blasts impressed reality too vividly for fancy to hold its sway. All was unchanged without: there reposed the sparkling lake, over which Dasee used to skim in her fairy shallop; the ancient trees, the mountains, the old house, and the church spire rising amidst the dark foliage; all were there as in the days of yore! As we passed the burial-ground on the hillside, an impulse which I could not resist impelled me to alight and to enter the sacred precincts alone. How many new graves there were; how many brilliant flowers clustering around them, as the last rays of the setting sun illuminated the rainbow tints; thus telling of glory for the departed, and whispering hope to the survivors, seeming to say, 'I shall rise again to-morrow; the flowers will bloom another and another summer; and the inmates of these quiet graves are not dead, but sleeping!'

I was aroused from a deep reverie into which I had fallen by the soft sound of infancy's sweet engaging prattle; and on looking up, I saw a portly lady with two fair children standing beside two little grassy mounds, and answering their questions in an earnest, impressive, and tender manner. That voice—I knew it at once! But how could I recognise the identity of the sedate and portly matron, the anxious nursing mother, and the wild, giddy, aerial sylph of the mountain-side? But it was Dasee herself, and she smiled when I called her 'Mrs Smith;' and the tears came into her eyes as we spoke of her numerous offspring: then I knew her again; for the smile was the saucy smile of yore, and the eyes wore the same touching and gentle expression which so often in girlhood had given promise of better things.

The little children intently watched our movements; their prattle ceased; and they looked awed, holding by their mother's hands with trustful love, as she pointed to the graves beside her, turning towards me a glance which I well understood, for the same remembrance flashed simultaneously on our minds. 'You do not forget; ah! I see you do not,' she whispered, 'those thoughtless words once spoken here, when I

heedlessly exclaimed, "I wish that I too had a grave to tend!" Am I not answered? For here sleeps my first-born, and by his side a golden-haired cherub babe—a second Dasee!' She meekly bowed her head; and silence was the only and the best sympathy I could offer as we slowly approached the old gabled house—the beloved home of her early years, the scene of so many wild exploits.

I have already said that *without* all remained unchanged; *within*, the same, but oh how altered!

The white-headed squire was gently led about, not by his daughter—she had other pressing duties to attend to—but by his granddaughter, Winny Smith; and if Winny Smith's papa had been fat and ruddy on our former visit to Swan Pool, what was he *now*!—while of his hilarity and happiness there could be no doubt: it was perfectly heartfelt and decided. Dame Winny, too, was as active, as kind, as fidgety, and talkative as ever; but withered and shrunken, and slightly deaf (only *slightly* she said); going about with a tall silver-headed stick, stumping loudly up and down the stairs and passages, ever giving warning of the dear old lady's approach unknown to herself.

There were so many tiny Smiths running about, that it seemed unlikely there was any real danger of their being individually spoiled by grandpapa or Aunt Winny. We observed that they all wore black sashes, and that Dasee also was attired in mourning, thus giving notice of a recent loss; we found, on inquiry, that she had not long buried the second child she had lost: her eldest born, a promising boy of seven years old, had been taken from her a few years previously, and she had mourned his loss nearly to the death; but this last bereavement found the mother calm and resigned, prepared to render back the priceless treasure unto Him who gave it.

Many visits in company together Dasee and myself paid to the burial-ground on the hillside, with her pretty children frolicking around us; and I believe, were the usual tenor of our conversations analysed, and the pith of the matter extracted, the condensation would be comprised in a small space, the following quotation of few words amply expressing our voluminous reminiscences—'Experience is the best of schoolmasters, only the school-fees are heavy.'

#### FOWLING IN FAROE AND SHETLAND.

THESE two groups of islands, situated in the northern Atlantic, and separated by only about one hundred and eighty miles, are not more contrasted in their political position and internal economy than in their geological structure, and consequent dissimilarity of scenery; though, from having been originally peopled by the same Scandinavian race, and long under one government, there are still to be discovered numerous traces of similar language, manners, and even personal appearance.

While Shetland is an integral portion of the home British empire, participating in her enlightened laws and policy, her freedom and progress in improvement, together with the good, and also, alas! evil, more or less attendant on our peculiar institutions, Faroe, as respects manners and state of society, is in much the same condition as it has been for a century past at least, or as Shetland was at that distance of time.

Faroe belongs to the Danish crown, is governed by its absolute though mild and paternal rule, and is subject to a royal monopoly of all commerce and other resources. From analogy and observation, however, we are disposed to the opinion that, for a half-instructed, isolated, and pastoral people, the Faroese appear to be at present in precisely the circumstances most conducive to their morality, independence, and happiness.

The geological formation of the Faroe Isles is of volcanic origin;\* hence their splendid basaltic columns

\* They are composed almost entirely of trap-rock.

and conical hills, deep valleys and mural precipices, narrow fiords and rushing tides. The shores are so steep, that in many of the islands there is no convenient landing-place. Boats are drawn up precipitous banks by ropes and pulleys; and a ship of large burden may lie close to a wall of rock from one to two thousand feet in height on either side, where the strait between is so narrow, that she can only be towed or warped onwards or outwards, as alongside a wharf. In some situations the cliffs present stupendous basaltic pillars, to which those of Staffa and the Giant's Causeway are pigmies. More commonly the precipices are broken into narrow terraces, overhanging crags, and gloomy recesses, tenanted by myriads of sea-fowl of every name, whose incessant motions and shrill echoing cries give variety and animation to scenes otherwise desolate in their sublimity.

Among these dizzy and almost confounding scenes the fowler pursues his hazardous but familiar avocation; for the eggs and flesh of the sea-fowl are an important part of the food of the Faroese, and the feathers a profitable article of exportation. Little thinks many a discontented town-bred workman, or surly field labourer, and still less many a fashionable *ennuyée*, with what cheeriness and courage numbers of their fellow-creatures encounter not merely fatiguing toil, but frightful danger, while in quest of their daily bread!

The manner of performing the perilous task of taking the birds from the precipices is thus described:—'The fowler (fuglemænd) is let down from the top of the cliff by a rope about three inches thick, which is fastened to the waist and thighs by a broad woollen band, on which he sits. The adventurer soon loses sight of his companions, and can only communicate with them by a small line attached to his body. When he reaches the terraces, often not more than a foot broad, he frees himself from the rope, attaches it to a stone, and commences his pursuit of the feathery natives. Where the nests are in a hollow of the rock, the bird-catcher gives himself a swinging motion by means of his pole, till the vibration carries him so close, that he can get footing on the rock. He can communicate to himself a swing of thirty to forty feet; but when the shelf lies deeper back, another rope is let down to his associates in a boat, who can thus give him a swing of one hundred or one hundred and twenty feet.' The Faroese talk with rapture of their sensations while thus suspended between sea and sky, swinging to and fro by what would seem a frail link when the value of a human life is concerned. Nay, so fascinating is this uncouth occupation, that there are often individuals who, provided with a small supply of food, cause themselves to be lowered to some recess, where the overhanging cliff gives shelter from above, and a platform of a few square feet scarce affords sufficient resting-place; and here, sometimes for a fortnight, and even three weeks together, will the adventurer remain alone, scrambling from crag to crag, collecting birds from the nests, or catching them as they fly past him with his fowling-pole and net, till he has filled his bags with their slaughtered bodies or their feathers. We cannot imagine a more wildly-sublime locality for the restless energy of man to choose as a temporary sojourning place. The ceaseless discordant scream of the birds, no doubt amazed at the dauntless intruder on their haunts, the roar of the surf, and the wailing of the wind among the rocks and crevices, might combine well-nigh to deafen any unaccustomed ears. Moreover, there is the danger, the awe-inspiring scenery, the solitude; yet several persons have averred to our informant that in such a unique position they have spent absolutely their happiest days!

In Faroe the story is related, which is also said to have occurred at St Kilda, Foula, and Skye,† of a father

and son having been lowered at once, the one above the other, on a fowling expedition, by the usual rope; that on beginning to ascend, they perceived two of the three cords of which it was composed had been cut by the abrasion of the rocks, and could not sustain the weight of more than one of them; and how, after a short but anguished contention, the father prevailed on the son to cut him off, and thus sacrifice his parent's life as the only chance of saving his own.

A far more instructive and thrilling anecdote, which, so far as we know, has not appeared in print, was told our informant in Faroe by a member of the young man's family to whom it occurred.

We have said that the fowlers are lowered from above, and manage to get stationed on some shelf or ledge of rock, frequently beneath an overhanging crag, where they disengage themselves from the rope, and proceed to their employment. Now it unfortunately happened that the young man we have alluded to, having secured his footing on the flat rock, by some accident lost his hold of the rope, to which was also attached his signal-line, which he had the agony to see, after a few pendulous swings, settle perpendicularly utterly beyond his reach. When the first moments of surprise and nearly mortal anguish had elapsed, he sat down to consider, as calmly as might be, what he should do, what effort make to save himself from the appalling fate of perishing by inches on that miserable spot. His friends above, he knew, after waiting the usual time, would draw up the rope, and finding him not there, would conclude he had perished; or should they by the same method descend to seek him, how among the thousand nooks of that bewildering depth of rock upon rock find the secret recess he had chosen, where he had so often congratulated himself on his favourable position, but which seemed now destined for his grave?

More than once the almost invincible temptation rushed on his mind of ending his distraction and suspense by leaping into the abyss. One short moment, and his fears and sufferings, with his 'life's fitful fever,' would be over. But the temporary panic passed away; he raised his thoughts to the guardian care of Omnipotence; and calmed and reassured, he trusted some mode of deliverance would present itself. To this end he more particularly scanned his limited resting-place. It was a rocky shelf, about eight feet wide, and gradually narrowing till it met the extended precipice, where not the foot of a gull could rest: at the other extremity it terminated in an abrupt descent of hundreds of feet: at the back was a mural rock, smooth and slippery as ice: and above was a beetling crag, overarched the place where he stood, outside of which depended his only safety—his unfortunate rope. Every way he moved, carefully examining and attempting each possible mode of egress from his singular prison-house. He found none. There remained, so far as his own efforts were concerned, one desperate chance to endeavour to reach the rope. By means of his long pole he attempted to bring it to his hand. Long he tried; but he tried in vain: he could hardly touch it with the end of the stick and other appliances; but no ingenuity could serve to hook it fast. Should he, then, leap from the rock, and endeavour to catch it as he sprung? Was there any hope he could succeed, or, catching, could he sustain his hold till drawn to the top? This indeed seemed his only forlorn hope. One fervent prayer, therefore, for agility, courage, and strength, and with a bold heart, a steady eye, and outstretched hand, he made the fearful spring! We dare not, and could not say exactly the distance—it was many feet—but he caught the rope, first with one hand, and in the next moment with the other. It slipped through, peeling the skin from his palms; but the knot towards the loops at the end stopped his impetus, and he felt he could hold fast for a time. He made the usual signal urgently, and was drawn upwards as rapidly as possible. Yet the swinging motion, the imminent danger, and his own precarious strength considered, we may well

\* It is similarly pursued in Foula, St Kilda, and others of the Scottish islands.

† To which of these several places, therefore, belongs the honour of the incident is doubtful.

believe the shortest interval would seem long, and that no ordinary courage and energy were still necessary for his safety. He reached the top, and instantly prostrated himself on the turf, returning aloud to the Almighty his fervent thanksgivings, a few words of which had hardly escaped his lips, when he sunk into utter insensibility.

Great was the amazement of his associates to find him hanging on by his hands—greater far their astonishment at his singular adventure: but once having told his tale, which every circumstance clearly corroborated, his pole and net being found on the rock as described, he never would again be prevailed on to recur to the subject; nor did he ever approach in the direction of the cliff from which he had descended, without turning shudderingly away from a spot associated with a trial so severe.

Quite contrasted to all these scenes, as we observed at the outset, are the aspect of nature and the manner of taking the sea-fowl and their eggs in Shetland. The hills here are low, none of the seaward precipices are above six or seven hundred feet high; and so far from fowling being pursued as a regular branch of employment, under proper regulations, as in Faroe, the Shetland landlords and other superiors by all means discourage their dependents from spending their time and energies in what is at best to them a desultory and most dangerous occupation, which, moreover, robs the rocks, otherwise so bare and rugged, of those feathered denizens, their appropriate ornament. Still, so fascinating and exciting is this method of idling away time, that might be much more profitably or improvingly employed, at least in these islands, that many of the fishermen frequent the cliffs and peril their lives in the forbidden pursuit. Serious accidents occasionally occur. Some time ago a poor man met a very dreadful fate. He had been creeping into a crevice where were several nests with eggs; having inserted half of his body, he had dislodged a stone, which held him fast. His decaying corpse was found some time afterwards; the head, shoulders, and outstretched hands jammed in the crevice, and the feet and legs hanging out.

More lately, a man noted for his fowling depredations went out one fine morning to gather shell-fish bait for the next day's fishing. It happened to be the day after the communion Sabbath, when there is sermon at noon. The fisherman's Sunday clothes were laid ready, his family went to church and returned, but he appeared not: night came, and he was yet absent. Still his family were under no particular anxiety, imagining he had gone to a friend's at some little distance. In the morning, however, when he did not join his boat's crew to go to the usual fishing, the alarm was raised, and inquiry and search immediately made. It was without success for a considerable time; but finally, near the brink of a precipice, where an opening rent in the rocks made an accessible way for a short distance downwards, the poor man's shoes and basket of bait were found. Following up this indication, his fishing associates proceeded in their boat to the base of the cliff, from whence they thought they saw something like a human being. With renewed hope they climbed up, and found their unfortunate comrade caught between two rocks, where he reclined as if asleep; but he had fallen from a great height, and was quite dead: and by this act, as of a truant schoolboy, for a few wild-fowl eggs, was a wife and large family left destitute and mourning!

There is in the island of Unst, the most northerly of the Shetlands, one man who, by his bravery, expertness, and, we may perhaps add, his incorrigible perseverance, has gained a sort of tacit immunity from the general restriction, or at least his poaching misdemeanours are winked at. His father was a noted fowler before him; and since his own earliest boyhood, he has been accustomed to make it his pastime to scramble among the steepest crags and cliffs, making many a hairbreadth escape, many an unheard-of prize. He has robbed the most inaccessible nooks of their inhabi-

tants, and even surprised the sea eagle in her nest. He climbs barefooted, and his toes clasp the slippery rock as talons would. Fear or dizziness he knows not of; and for a few shillings, or for an afternoon's recreation, he will scale many a ladder of rock, and penetrate many a time-worn crevice, where human foot but his own will probably never tread. Every cranny, every stepping-place of the precipitous headlands of his native island are intimately known to him; and at how much expense of unconquerable perseverance, zig-zag explorings, and undaunted courage this has been accomplished, we may not stop too particularly to relate.

On one occasion, led on by his indomitable love of exploring, he had passed to a point of a cliff to which even he had never dared to venture before. His object was to discover the spot where he believed a pair of eagles had long built unmolested. Overjoyed, he reached the place; triumphantly he possessed himself of the eggs (for which, by the by, a commercial collector afterwards paid him five shillings); and then he for the first time became aware of his whereabouts. How he got there he could not even imagine. He paused a few moments: it was not fear, but unfeigned surprise and awe that entranced him; and then the consideration naturally forced itself on his attention—'How shall I return?' It ought to be mentioned, for the benefit of the uninitiated, that it is much more difficult to *get down* than to *ascend*. The whole tortuosities and difficulties of the path are more clearly in view, and the head is apt not to be so steady. In the present case, moreover, the excitement was past—the object was attained; and it is wonderful how the blood cools, and courage becomes calculating, in these latter circumstances. Well, beside the plundered eyrie our gallant adventurer sat cogitating. 'I'll never return, that's certain, to begin with,' he said to himself. 'After all my escapes and exploits, my time is come at last. Well, if it is, it is: let me meet it like a man! If it is not come, I shall get down in safety, as I have done ere now, though never from such an awful place before.' So he precipitately began the descent—plunging on without an idea except his early-imbibed belief in predestination, and an occasional aspiration to the Almighty for protection. He never knew, he says, how or by what paths he reached a place of comparative safety; but he would not attempt to go again to that spot for twenty guineas.

It is not, however, only in those localities with which from childhood he has been familiar that our courageous fowler is dexterous and adventurous in his undertakings. Tempted by an offer of adequate remuneration from an amateur, he engaged to procure an eagle's egg from a distant quarter, where they were known to have a nest. The gentleman, in the interval of his absence, sorely repented that he had proffered the bribe, though he by no means urged the step. But in due time the brave cragsman returned successful, having twice scaled the precipice to the eyrie. The first time when he reached the place, from whence he scared the parent birds, he found the nest so situated, that though he saw the eggs, he could not by any possibility reach them. Nothing daunted, he returned and made his preparations. To the end of a long fishing-rod he attached a bladder, the mouth of which he kept distended by a wire. Reaching this simple but ingenious apparatus to the nest, from the perching-place where he leaned, he gradually worked the eggs into the bladder-bag with the point of the rod, and bore them off in triumph. It was the most lucrative, though the most dangerous adventure he had ever accomplished; for the locality was strange, the weather was gloomy, and the birds were fierce, and at one time in startling proximity to the spoiler.

This man, who in every respect is the *beau ideal* of a successful fowler, is now in the prime of life, about medium height, active and agile of course, and slender and lithe as an eel. During the late trying season of destitution from the failure of crops and fishing, he has mainly supported his family by the produce of such



exploits as we have been detailing. And he has a little son, the tiny counterpart of himself, who, almost ever since he could walk, he has taught to climb the rocks along with him, and who therefore bids fair, should he escape casualties, to be as bold and expert in fowling as is his parent.

### PROGRESS OF THE EDUCATION QUESTION IN SCOTLAND.

TWELVE months ago, we took occasion to point out what we considered the insufficient and unsatisfactory state of elementary education in Scotland, where, by the institution of parish schools, it might be supposed to have been on a tolerably perfect footing. Since that period the subject has undergone some discussion; and even those who advocate existing arrangements, allow that something is wanting to remedy acknowledged defects. The longer that the Scottish parish school system is considered, the less will it appear possible to adapt it to the present and prospective wants of the country without a very considerable change in its administration. While all acknowledge the value of its past services, and look on it still with respect, an impression is very generally gaining ground that it must submit to a by no means limited reform; and further, that this reform can be effected only by legislative revision and enactment.

The leading defects of the present polity are briefly these:—Only one school properly constituted exists in a parish; while some parishes, by reason of increase of population, would require several schools, all equally well supported by public grant. Originally placed in a great degree under the cognisance and government of the Established Church, the schools remain under the same management, although, in the course of events, the establishment is now the minority. In consequence of this arrangement, as well as the obligation of teachers to subscribe a religious test, the schools are sectarian in character; and the greater number of children—nearly the whole in some districts—are educated at schools got up by private parties, or by dissenting and seceding bodies. The salaries of the teachers are preposterously small; but there exist no means of legally increasing them consistently with independence of principle. It is very much to be regretted that any representation of these and other defects should lead to the slightest animosity or party feeling. The parish schools, as we have always understood, were not erected for the benefit of this or that party, but for all; and they have been endowed accordingly. If, then, society alter so far as to leave them in a false position, in which they cannot possibly realise the intention of their founders, is it not a public duty to aim at such changes as a calm consideration of the subject will suggest?

We have been induced to make these few remarks from observing that one of the largest and most respectable seceding bodies in Scotland—the United Presbyterian Synod—numbering about five hundred chapels, has had the sagacity to take an impartial and correct view of the state of our elementary education, and the courage to indicate the necessary remedial measures. The following document has been issued under the authority of the body:—

'At a meeting, held at Edinburgh on the 28th June 1848, of the Committee on Public Questions appointed by the United Presbyterian Synod, the following Resolutions were adopted on the subject of NATIONAL EDUCATION.

I. That the acknowledged inefficiency of the Parochial Schools of Scotland, and the dissatisfaction with regard to them which generally exists, are mainly attributable to the subjection of these schools to the control of the Established Church; while there is thus combined the inconsistency of a system called national being placed in the hands of a minority, with the injustice of maintaining the interests of a party at the public expense.

II. That the remedy for these evils is not to be found

in educational grants to different religious denominations—a scheme whereby the interests both of religion and of education are liable to suffer from the spirit of party; that such a result is much to be deprecated, at a period of life when it is a main object of all sound moral training to foster kindly and generous sentiments; and that where this scheme has been put to the test of experiment, it is already yielding the bitter fruits of alienation and animosity which might have been anticipated.

III. That to render the parochial system of education truly a national one, the following conditions appear indispensable:—

1. The control of the Established Church over the Parochial Schools entirely to cease, and the right of superintendence and of management not to be placed in the hands of religious denominations as such.

2. Attendance at a Normal School, and certified acquaintance with the art and practice of teaching, to be required of all candidates for the situation of teachers.

3. Security for the sound principles of teachers to be sought in a right mode of appointment; and religious tests to be abolished, as sectarian in spirit, and at the same time nugatory as evidence of character.

4. Heads of families in parishes, or in such districts as may be found convenient, to have the right of electing the teacher, and of superintending by a committee of their number or otherwise the business of the schools.

5. The funds at present set apart for the support of Parochial Schools to continue to be applied to this purpose, and such additions as may be found necessary in particular districts, to be raised by local taxation—with a view to place the system under the wholesome control of public opinion.

6. Stated returns from the National Schools, embracing the branches taught, fees, attendance, &c. to be made to the Privy-Council, or to a National Board of Education, and a full digest of such returns to be published annually.

JAMES HARPER, *Covenanter.*

A short time previously, in May 1848, the following resolutions were come to by the same body on the not less important subject of University Tests in Scotland:—

'That the existing University Tests are not only sectarian, unjust, and impolitic, but totally inefficient for the professed object for which they are imposed—namely, to ascertain the religious principles of persons appointed to professorships: that this synod regard the entire abrogation of such tests as desirable; and are of opinion that the right of appointment, placed in the hands of duly qualified parties, and exercised under the influence of public opinion, would prove the most eligible and available check upon improper nominations to chairs in the national universities.'

Those who are interested in the progress of national education will be gratified to observe that one of the most numerous religious bodies in Scotland has, much to its honour, taken so enlarged a view of this important question.

### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

#### WAGES AND LIVING IN GERMANY.

THE price of labour is lower in Silesia than elsewhere in Germany, yet Silesia is one of the most valuable and industrious of the Prussian and Austrian provinces. The explanation is, that competition for work is great, owing to the dense population of the country—even of the mountainous portion belonging to Austria. The peasant who divides his time between the cultivation of the ground and his mechanical trade, makes only a fraction more than 3s. a week; while, if employed in a manufactory, his earnings do not exceed 6s. 6d. The linen manufacture is here very ancient; but it is still for the most part carried on by the country people in their own huts, and it yields them but a scanty subsistence.

In Prussia, the hours of labour are long, averaging twelve in the day; and for this period of toil a journeyman receives 1s. 5d. In a manufactory the wages are

similar, being 8s. 6d. a week. In Bavaria, the workman does not gain more than from 5s. 6d. to 7s. a week; but here he is comfortably lodged at the rate of L.1, 12s. a year.

In order to judge of these prices, we must take into account the general expense of living. Throughout Saxony, beef averages 3½d. a pound, pork 4½d., and bread ¾d. a pound. In Bavaria, beef is 3½d. a pound, mutton the same price, pork 3½d., and bread ¾d. a pound. In the Rhenish provinces the same prices very generally prevail. It must be confessed, however, that labourers have little to do with any of these articles but bread; three-fourths of them knowing nothing of meat but the name. This bread is made of rye, and is black, heavy, and sour; but they do not eat it entirely from necessity, but likewise from choice. They think it sustains them better than wheat bread; and for this reason it is used likewise by plain families of a higher rank. This rye bread, with a little butter and potatoes, and in the morning coffee, forms the daily nourishment of the German workman. Meat, we have said, is unknown to the mass; and beer and wine are only tasted on extraordinary occasions.

Such meagre nourishment is not favourable to the character of the workman either morally or physically. It may be said that the German is always a slow coach; but the German working-men are apathetic and indolent, and as far inferior to the French, who live better, as the French are to the English, who live best of all. In a recent report made to the French ministry of agriculture and commerce, it is remarked that substantial and abundant living has a great influence on the quantity of work a man can get through; and that the difference in this respect is the cause of the advantage the English working-man possesses over the French. 'Experience,' continues the report, 'has frequently shown that when the latter enjoys as substantial aliment as his rival, he works as hard and as long.'

It might be supposed at first sight that, with bread at ¾d. a pound, the Prussian wages of 8s. 6d. a week would be at least equal to 17s. in England. But this is not the case; for in the latter country bread is only one of many items which make up the general expense of living. There may be little chance of a money residue in either country; but in England, the workman on low wages has at least the superiority in food, and what he terms comfort—things of which money is merely the representative.

The great increase of potato culture in Germany is a consequence of the lowness of wages; and the fact would serve of itself to disprove the common paradox, that the Irish are poor *because* they live on potatoes. The truth is the very reverse: the Irish live on potatoes because they are poor, and because they were prevented by the operation of the corn laws from having recourse to cheap grain. If there was a similar law in Germany interdicting potatoes, the effect would not be to prevent the spread of poverty, but simply to deny to the people a wholesome variety in the cheap food to which their existing poverty restricts them.

In Ireland, lowness of diet has the same effect as in Germany: it makes the labourer both weak and indolent. Professor Hancock, in his smart remarks on the opinions of those who desire government interference to give the Irish a taste for better food, does not advert to this circumstance. 'Let them try,' says he, 'the first potato-fed Celt they find with a good dinner of such established Saxon fare as roast-beef and plum-pudding, and I will venture to predict that a taste for good living will be developed with a rapidity, and to an extent, quite surprising to the pocket of the incredulous theorists.' The professor means, that an Irish peasant will choose a good dinner in preference to a bad one, if he has them both before him: but this is trifling with the subject. The taste sought to be developed is of that kind which will make a man *work* for what he covets—which will subdue indolence, drunkenness, and other bad habits, and raise him in the social scale.

#### RATIONAL CORSETS.

So much good advice has been thrown away upon the ladies in the matter of tight-lacing, that we are glad to notice an invention which goes far to divest them of the power of injuring themselves by means of the corset. This is a new application of caoutchouc, which is introduced, in the form of fine threads covered with lace-thread, into the staple of the cloth of which stays are made. Such a mode of introducing this material, it will be seen, permits free evaporation; while the elasticity obtained does away with the necessity for whale-bone, except in such thin flakes as can do no harm. In the ease with which an elastic ligature like this yields to the motions of the chest, consists of course its great superiority over the old corset; but the perfect adaptation of the new invention to the shape, and the graceful flexibility it permits to the figure, will, we suspect, be considered still greater advantages by the wearers. The inventors are Messrs Thomas and Co. of Cheap-side, London, whose business of staymaking would afford some rather curious statistics. In this apparently unimportant manufacture they employ 2000 work-people; 800 in London, and the rest in the provinces. It is worthy of observation that the lower we descend in society, the more bigoted we find females to the worst species of stays. Strength and unyielding solidity are the grand properties sought for; and in some places the stays offered for sale are actually weighed, and those preferred which are found to be the *heaviest*!

#### JAMES GREGOR GRANT'S POEMS.\*

THERE is a story darkly hinted at, not related, by Dante, of a young wife who was imprisoned by her causelessly jealous husband in a tower built in the midst of a pestilential marsh. Here he watches day by day—himself her sole jailer—the ebbing life of his victim, till the tragedy closes with her death. To this legend the immortal Florentine has given a few lines, but these contain the materials of a fine poem.† The husband, it should be observed, is exposed to the same danger as the wife. He is no common assassin, who takes the life of a supposed offender, because it is in his power: he endures all the horrors of the marsh—the silence, the solitude, the sickening, the creeping of the aerial poison through his veins, the visible and tangible approach of death—all this he endures that he may see it endured by *her*; and yet we may conjecture that there lurks in some mystic recess of his heart an idea—almost a hope—that she will not be the first to perish. We may thus fancy the co-existence of undying love even with so monstrous a revenge, and divide our pity between the two victims of one destroying passion—the murderer and the murdered.

This we conceive to be the poetical view of a repulsive subject, and the only one which could fairly adapt it for exciting the sympathies on which it is the province of poetry to act. Poetry is the priestess of nature; and to imagine a cold, slow, calculating, selfish, and yet horrible revenge, is an apostasy of which her high and holy nature is incapable. Of this apostasy Mr Grant has been guilty; but although he would thus appear to be deficient in the loftier attributes of his calling, he partakes so largely in other respects of the true poetical spirit, that we should think it improper to allow his

\* *Madonna Pia* and other Poems. By James Gregor Grant. 2 vols. London: Smith, Elder, and Co. 1848.

† *Ricorditi di me, chi son la Pia:  
Siena mi fe': disfecemi Maremma:  
Salai colui, che 'nnanellata pria,  
Disposando m'avea con la sua gemma.*

DANTE: *Purgatorio*, Canto 24.



volumes to pass unnoticed in the common torrent of verse.

If Pietra partook as largely of the human nature of Othello as Madonna Pia does of that of Desdemona, we should have some difficulty in finding in the poetry of the day a match for the poem before us. And it does seem extraordinary that Mr Grant, in adapting his few materials, should have wandered so far not only from human nature, but from Dante. His own first stanza should have suggested the true theory.

'Madonna Pia! thou whose gentle shade  
In the sad Tuscan's awful path arose,  
When in the milder penal realm he strayed—  
Yet breathed no murmur of thy mortal woes,  
Nor creature, dead or living, didst upbraid  
With bringing thy sweet life to bitter close—  
Sighing but this—"that the Maremma slew,  
And he, the loved one, thy Pietra, *knew*."

Had Pietra been a loveless, ruthless hangman, as he represents him, this affecting silence would have been mere stupidity. But Mr Grant makes us carry the stupidity (the name of which in romance is *feminine devotion*) to a still more surprising extent, as we shall see by and by.

Madonna Pia was young, beautiful, high-born, and prodigiously wealthy—

'Yet not for wealth did young Pietra seek  
This dazzling Phoenix of Sienna's sky—  
He saw an empire on her lip and cheek,  
An El-Dorado in her glorious eye!  
He heard sweet music when he heard her speak;  
Wings sprang within him when her step drew nigh;  
And the least glance or smile she threw on him  
Made all of brightness else look cold and dim.'

This radiant creature returns his love: they are married—they are all in all to each other—they are happy to the highest pitch that human nature can endure—and they believe it impossible that anything can occur to break the bright and smooth tenor of their charmed life.

'Never should hope or fear their steps divide—  
Never should love in their deep hearts decay—  
Never should joy or sorrow, side from side  
Sever their rich affections, night or day!  
Never should jealousy (the jaundiced-eyed  
And canker-hearted) make of them a prey!—  
"Never, oh never!" blinding Passion cried—  
"Never, oh never!" blinded Faith replied.'

So far all is well. This portion of the poem is managed with infinite grace. You seem to breathe as well as read beauty; and in obedience to the magical wand of love, the moving world subsides into passionate repose—

'It was a lovely summer's loveliest eve  
When she—far lovelier still!—her passion told.  
The lingering sunset took reluctant leave,  
As, ray by ray, expired its purpling gold;  
The very twilight, dying, seemed to grieve,  
Lest never more such joy it might behold!  
All nature slept, as if on folded wing,  
And silence listened like a charmed thing.'

The author pauses on this portion of his picture, touching and retouching with new delight. But his task presses. The marriage was already among the bygone things of the time: the excitement of the city was at an end—

'And fluttering gallants sought no more to please  
The wedded wonder of the Siennese.'

The circumstance which gives its tragic colour to the piece is a *smile*; and this we see has, as it is managed, awakened the ire of some of the critics, as a thing too slight and meaningless for such grave results. But a word may here be ventured in the poet's defence.

The disproportion between cause and effect is a leading peculiarity of the olden ballads and metrical romances, in which the heroes, leaping suddenly from love to hate, and from indifference to the wildest passion, appear little better than maniacs as we sedate moderns. The reason simply is, that they want a historian to elaborate motives capable of explaining the transition. It was not the fashion of our ancestors to go into any details but those of action; and their suddenness is frequently termed vigour and simplicity by a more metaphysical generation. The fault, therefore, of 'Madonna Pia' lies not so much in the dire effects of a trivial cause, as in its inconsistency in failing elsewhere to fulfil in the same manner the conditions of the olden legend.

However this may be, Pietra sees one day a smile on the radiant face of his beloved; and, following the direction of her eyes, behold it is reflected in the face of a man! This is absolutely all. Nothing preceded the smile; nothing followed; it was itself accuser and proof in one—

'Sternly he sullen on their homeward way;  
Sternly he sullen to their chamber door;  
Sternly he left Madonna there—a prey  
To many a bitter pang unfelt before:  
Alone he left her—and alone she lay,  
Wondering and weeping all this strangeness o'er;  
Wondering and weeping—pouring sigh on sigh,  
And asking her deaf pillow "Why, oh why?"'

During the night her lonely curtains are withdrawn, and a stern voice bids her 'rise.' The face of the bidder is full of wrath and sin; and his parting steps shake the chamber as she prepares with a quaking heart to follow.

'As down some dusky stream a dying swan  
Creeps slow, slow down the marble stairs she crept,  
Shivering with icy terror—and, anon,  
From out the portal's gloomy archway stept;  
There sat Pietra, staring, spectral-wan,  
And ghastly-motionless, as if he slept  
On his dark steed; another neighbored before her,  
And to its saddle menial hands upbore her.'

Away go the fated pair; and the first gleam of dawn breaks pale and drear as they pass through the last of the gates of Sienna. Skirting the craggy heights of Volterra, they ride seaward, and at length their horses' feet plash in the deadly swamp of the Maremma. In the middle there is a lonely tower, rising like an isle in a lake; and this is henceforward to be the abode of the husband and his victim. A wild scream bursts from the heart of Madonna Pia, as she stands there face to face with the avenger, and reads his purpose; and with the instinct of love, she tries to take refuge from his cruelty even in his arms. He dashes her to the ground and withdraws. This incident, it will be seen, is merely a following out of the poet's radical mistake; but still it must be said that it is in the worst possible taste, sinking Pietra, as it does, from a being of preternatural wickedness to a mere vulgar ruffian, and depriving the piece of one of the chief elements even of the false sublime which the author aims at.

'She rose, at length—but not to rave or stamp,  
Or rend distractedly her golden hair—  
Slowly she rose—and round her prison damp  
Looked long and pryingly, with dreadful stare.  
Save a thick ropy slime from the green swamp,  
Roof, walls, and pavement, all were loathly bare—  
And one stern loop-hole, barred with jealous might,  
Poured in the poisonous air and pale drear light.'

Thither she dragged—and saw the fenny grass  
Sullenly wave o'er all that sullen sea;  
And heard the bitter boom in the morass,  
And saw the wild swan hurrying to the sea;  
And dreary gleams, and drearier shadows, pass  
O'er lonely wilds that lonelier could not be:  
And then she turned, all hopelessness, within,  
And felt that all was hopelessly akin.'

She humbles herself at his feet; she tries expostulation, intreaty—all in vain; she implores that he will at

least let her know in what she has offended him. He is as mute as a statue.

'Gone—and no word: and thus, all sternly dumb,  
Daily, for months, her prison to and fro  
Implacable in silence did he come,  
Implacable in silence did he go.  
Oh! list, poor victim! list the bitterness hum,  
List to the sullen winds without that blow,  
List to what'er drear voice comes o'er the fen—  
Pietra's voice thou'lt never list again!'

He comes and goes as silently as a shadow, his only errand to bring her food, and look at her wasting and withering away—like himself. The pestilential air of the Maremma works upon them both like poison.  
*Both!*

'The canker spreading to his bud and leaf  
Poor lost Madonna saw with tenfold grief—  
Grief deeper far than for her own decline!  
And once, when on his hands the sunbeams strook,  
And she beheld how fast they 'gan to pine,  
And with a tremor (not sweet Pity's!) shook,  
Love conquered terror, with a strength divine  
That cruelty itself could not rebuke—  
And she implored, with heart, and lip, and eye,  
"Let not both perish!—leave me here to die!"'

The descriptions we now have of the successive changes of the Madonna's spirit in her dungeon are the finest portions of the poem; but our space restricts us from copying a single stanza. A winter night at length comes—a dreary, dismal, bitter night; and Pietra, knowing that there is little chance of her living till the morning, comes—faint, ghastly, wan himself—to look upon her once more. Even then, when he finds her 'weak, as dying lamps are weak,' he will not suffer her to hear his voice.

'Yet to the last her shivering frame she raised,  
On him, on him, to pour her latest sighs;  
And, to the last, on him she gazed and gazed,  
With Love's beseeching and forgiving eyes!  
Until their orbs that heavy film had glazed  
Which melts no more till melted in the skies;  
And her last words fell brokenly and weak—  
"Guiltless I die!—Oh loved Pietra, SPEAK!"

Then first in the avenger's bosom grew  
The anguish of one dread misgiving thought,  
Off said, oft writ, that "*dying lips speak true*."  
Oh God! if now that fearful truth were taught!  
One little word, while yet his voice she knew—  
E'en one, with heavenly soothing might be fraught:  
"Breathe but that word!" the angel Mercy sighed—  
"Breathe not the word!" a stubborn demon cried!

And in his tortured heart the strife raged on,  
Till, in a moment, all the strife was vain:  
The weary spirit to repose was gone—  
The broken heart had broken from its chain.  
He pressed his hand upon her bosom wan,  
And felt and listened for the throb of pain;  
But all was still: pain, pulse, and breath had flown,  
And he and sated vengeance were alone!

Such is practically the close of a fine and faulty poem. We do not repeat the accusation, so loudly made elsewhere, of plagiarism; for this, we think, is more in manner than matter. The cadences of other poets (chiefly modern) appear to have lingered so long in our author's ear that they come out unconsciously with his own ideas. We cannot trace any more than the usual conveyance of thoughts, although occasionally words and forms bear almost a ludicrous resemblance to those of other writers: the line, for instance,

'I pass these raptures, for these raptures passed,'

might seem to be from a passage in the 'Rejected Addresses' inscribed with the name of Crabbe. Neither do we predicate of Mr Grant, as others do, that he will improve in his next attempt. We are willing to accept of 'Madonna Pia' as one of the best contributions to the poetical literature of the day, and have no faith that a practised hand, as that evidently is which has produced it, will surpass its own work on another occasion. In such circumstances, the contrary is more frequently the case than otherwise. At any rate it is not experience in writing the author wants, for in the mere me-

chanical part he has little to learn; but if he would rise to a loftier strain, he must devote himself to a severe and searching study, not of the forms, but principles of his divine art, and be touched with a higher and holier faith in the duties and responsibilities of poetry.

## WINTERING IN PAU.

BY A LADY.

SECOND ARTICLE—OCTOBER.

WITH October came cool weather, and we began to extend our morning walks into the beautiful country, which, more particularly on the side towards the mountains, afforded us a never-ending variety of interesting excursions. On Mondays the scene on the thoroughfares was enlivened by a perfect crowd of the peasantry coming to the weekly market with their wares. It was really not always easy to thread a clear path through the throng of busy, happy-looking people streaming on towards the town. Some were on horseback, some in charge of carts, a mob on foot, all well loaded, full as many women there as men, and numbers of them riding astride on their small spirited mountain ponies, in the midst of sacks of grain or wool, or baskets of farm produce. They wore their usual dress—the worsted gown and cotton shawl, and a bright-coloured handkerchief tied about the head: the only addition to their ordinary costume was a sort of skirt, open both in front and behind, like two aprons put on together, one at each side, and hanging down over their feet. Monday was the only day the little quiet town seemed to be alive: all the rest of the week there was nothing doing in Pau. Empty streets, deserted shops, a closed market-house, all still and silent, resting, as it were, after the bustle of the Monday. But October is the dull month here; hardly any one is to be met with belonging to the upper classes. The préfet, and the magistrates, and the English, are all at the different watering-places. It is the holiday season for the French officials, the only relief from duty given to them, this six weeks' vacation; the rest of the year they never quit their business.

Society being for the present unattainable, we had leisure to continue our observations upon the locality, and to acquaint ourselves more thoroughly with the habits of the place. The weather continuing for some time cool and showery, our walks were extremely pleasant. We found the roads good in every direction: they are all under government control, and managed with a regularity which insures perfection: men were constantly employed on them in small gangs, which appeared to proceed a certain distance, repairing diligently whatever was amiss, and then to return to begin again. The glazed hat of the labourer bore his number on the front: the same number was marked on his measuring pole and other tools, and on his provision bag. Women sometimes assisted in breaking stones, for female labour is abundantly employed in out-door work hereabouts. Indeed on the little patches belonging to some of the cottages, I have seen the wife do all—dig, or weed, or plant, as might be—while the husband obligingly walked about with the baby. The bypaths between these little farms and hamlets, and among the fields and vineyards belonging to them, always drew us on from one nest of beauty to another; the picture being always interesting, whether we found it snugly sheltered by fine old oaks and chestnuts on the plain, or up along the *côteaux* backed by those wonderful mountains. On the Bayonne road is the handsome villa of a British family, built upon a terrace among vineyards facing the Pyrenees, and overlooking the village in which still stands the old farmhouse where Henry IV. was nursed. Further on is the village and old cathedral of Lescures, well worth a visit. Striking off from the *parc* through fields to a sort of waste meadow by the *gâve*, we one day came upon a saw-mill, very small and very primitive indeed in its construction. A single saw, and the labour of a man and boy, were all the means employed

in the dilatory process of cutting up the timber. An aunt of mine, who in her youth had once been in our own Highlands, described just such a one as then existing in the wilds of Abernethy on the Spey. There was a flour-mill adjoining our Bernais saw-mill much on the same simple plan: no machinery for sifting the flour, nor for raising the sacks, nor any contrivance of any kind for lessening or expediting labour; indeed all arts appear to be in their infancy in these parts. The spinning all over the country was beautiful, yet much of it was done with only the distaff and spindle; the weaving good, with very clumsy looms, most of them too narrow to do justice to the fine table-linen made in the district, which is therefore spoiled by having a seam down the middle of most of it. The climate is particularly suited to the growth of flax. Were this crop more skilfully managed, the linen fabrics of the Lower Pyrenees might rival the productions of Belgium and Germany. The soil generally is so fertile, the rains so frequent, the temperature so equable, in spite of its many changes, that a good cultivator might increase to an extraordinary amount the produce of the land. At present, it seems to yield but little. Indian corn or maize, natural grass, and the vine, were all the crops we noticed, with the exception of small patches of flax and cabbage. The pottery-ware in general use was of the coarsest description, ill-shaped and half-baked, and very easily broken. There was nothing between this and fine china: no middle ranks of crockery—that most useful of earthenwares, which fills our British homes with the civilising elements of true comfort. The hardware was equally defective; knives dull and edgeless; such locks! keys without a ward! hinges only fit for barn-doors! such shovels! and, above all, such tongs! Really the tongs in our highly-polished drawing-room seemed sadly out of place among all the varnish and the gilding. They were rude enough, but too slight for the kitchen; and the looseness of the screw which attempted to confine the two very long legs, made any use of them impossible. Luckily, logs of wood could be easily moved by the fingers.

On the road to Gaut, just a little beyond the turn to the Jurançon common, was the country-house of M. de Bernadotte, nephew to the late king of Sweden. The open gate often showed us grounds more neatly kept than is customary here, and fine large English-bred horses exercising. The stables were close to the house, in front; the square garden, with a pigeon-house tower at each corner, opened out of the courtyard; and a small thicket shaded a well-kept lawn beyond the railings between the garden wall and the stables: curious arrangements in our eyes, but almost general here, where there seemed to be no wish to put any object necessary in the economy of the household out of sight. The king of Sweden was born in a small house in one of the lesser streets of Pau, suited to the finances of an obscure family. He has, we understood, been very liberal to his connections, with all due regard to their position, beyond which he has never attempted to raise them; neither did he ever invite any of his relations to settle in his new country: he appears to have had but few; we met with none but the handsome owner of this villa. We all liked much to climb the coteaux, among the vineyards and the chestnut-groves, and to wander in the grounds of some deserted chateau; for the Bernais nobles make little use of their pretty country-houses: they resort to them sometimes on a summer day with a party of pleasure, or, in rare cases, they may ruralise in them for a week or two; but with their sociable habits, a town life is so much more convenient to them, they seldom think of quitting the pavement, except when, as in the case of M. de Bernadotte, the house be near enough to the town to be within a few minutes' walk of it.

As these our pedestrian excursions were of some hours' duration, and the weather still very warm for those in exercise, we used to sit down to rest here and there under a chestnut-tree, or by an open fountain, or

near the hedge of some vineyard, refreshing ourselves with a bunch of fine, ripe, purple grapes, to which all wayfarers are welcome. At the moment, we thought them delicious, yet they were seldom high-flavoured; sometimes they were even harsh, when the vineyard had a faulty exposure. I filled my pockets with chestnuts unscrupulously, as the ground under the trees was thickly strewn with such as had fallen. They form part of the food of the peasantry, and are offered, ready boiled, in the streets, by people who carry about small charcoal stoves on a movable stall, over which they prepare them for a price almost nominal. Good medlars grew in the hedges, and a small green plum, not too acid to be agreeable; and the wild-flowers, late as it was in the season, were so innumerable, I brought home large nosegays of many beautiful varieties; for the whole country is a garden. I am no botanist, so that I may confound classes and species; but I often counted from thirty to forty brilliant flowers in my natural collection, all of which to me looked quite different one from the other. Chance being so bountiful, art reposes: there is not what we would call a flower garden in the whole country; hardly a cultivated flower; the market gardeners merely aim at supplying the ladies with bouquets, to be held in the hand at their parties; and the grounds round the villas have neither flower-beds nor shrubberies; and very bare they look without green grass, with a few stray plants, a dozen or so of China roses, and some painted tubs with oranges and clematis in them.

We had early in the month signed our contract with our landlord, a very grave affair, three good pages enumerating so many particulars, item one to nearly thirty, that it might have served for a treaty between two rival states. We had received its duplicate, made two inventories, and both parties had signed all the four papers; bows, and pretty speeches, and many civilities, had ensued; our landlord had dined with us, and had expressed his delight at the dinner being served so hot—a very rare occurrence in these parts. There are no covers to any of the dishes, nor any hot-water stands, nor any attention paid to the quick serving of the table. We had brought our own peculiar comforts with us, and we found them always most fully appreciated—our silver teapot in particular; no people being fonder of good tea than the French, or who make it worse, which I attribute to the economical pinch of tea let to stand for an indefinite time in a coarsely-manufactured china teapot. In return for the few hints we found ourselves able to give, there were a good many we soon discovered it would be very desirable to take. One of these is the making of coffee; another the management of the *pot au feu*, which furnishes the daily soup, and forms the foundation of every sauce required, at little or no expense, as only odds and ends in general go into it, with the small bit of beef which daily appears in the bourgeois' houses as the *bouilli*. There it stands from early morning, a tall earthenware jug or jar, in the midst of a bed of wood-ashes, just at the corner of the hearth, simmering away, and applied to when wanted. In the north of France, the lower orders take this or a poorer soup poured upon bread for breakfast. Our servants at Pau, like their betters, regaled themselves with a cup of milk-coffee early, and then waited till between ten and eleven o'clock for the substantial repast which forms the French *déjeuner*—a little dinner, in fact—our luncheon, meat and wine being served at it. The whole town reeked at this hour with the smell of the onions used in all the stews preparing. The dinner-hour of the place is five o'clock: our servants dined after us, and they were always glad of our teapot in the evening, though they never made any regular supper. They were very easily satisfied. They had a certain allowance of bread—a large one we thought it; a few sous weekly for wine; so many aprons a-piece; and their wages. They never made any complaints; they were never out of the way; they did their work as well as they could; and they always appeared gay and good-



humoured. The bread supplied to the household we could not eat, except when hot; it was crisply baked, looked light and inviting, and was really good just as it left the oven; but it was quite sour when cold. We had considerable trouble in hunting out 'English bread,' which, being a fancy article, we paid for it a fancy price. At home we send for 'French bread' as a luxury. The milk, too, was sometimes at fault with us: one morning it would not boil for the coffee, a real distress to us, who depended on it for our English style of breakfast. It is brought round but once a day, although the cows are milked twice, and worked hard, poor things, all the same: it was they that were commonly yoked to the bullock-carts. The two milkings are put together; and as there are no dairies, the milk during the very hot weather frequently sours. There is no redress. The peasant owner of a cow or two merely parts with an overplus: if one customer does not take it, another will; he is not making a trade of the business; he does not want to increase his stock, or his means, or his employments; he succeeded to little, is content to leave behind him nothing additional: he wishes his children just to resemble himself. There is no great riches among them, but they all looked comfortable; they had food, fuel, substantial furniture, and serviceable clothing; and they seemed to be in their own quiet, and perhaps rather rude way about as happy a peasantry as is existing. Extremely industrious they are. I do not know that we ever saw man, woman, or child fit for any work, idle. The women never have their knitting out of their hands. As they walk along under their burdens, or sit beside their stalls, they are all busy with their glancing needles, making with these simple implements not only gloves and stockings, but almost every article of dress. Some of the things manufactured of the fine wool of the Pyrenees, tinted with the brightest colours, are worked thus into patterns of exceeding beauty.

The old women spin a great deal, many of them using only the distaff and spindle, and walking about while thus employed in charge probably of their grandchildren. A rag or a tatter is not to be seen among them; their clothing is coarse, and frequently not of a piece, but there is never a hole visible. The extreme personal tidiness of the population is indeed remarkable, after the flimsy style of dress gaining ground among the lower orders in our own country. In France, the dress of the different classes is so exactly defined, that there can be seen no faded finery decking tawdrily the persons of those whose occupations require a more substantial equipment. The country-people in their woollens, the men with a blouse over the good jacket and trousers, the women with a handkerchief upon the head, stuff gown and stuff apron, the latter very full, with two deep pockets in it, are quite distinct in appearance from the bourgeois in his froc or broadcloth jacket, the bourgeoisie in her mob-cap and small white collar and finer apron. The servants smarten themselves a little, but the cooks all wear the handkerchief upon the head; and the *bonnes* can neither put on a bonnet, nor gloves, nor a silk gown; nor can they emulate the grisettes and the young wives of the tradesmen, and arrange, like them, their pretty hair better than is commonly managed by our own young gentlewomen: a neat plain cap is their only permitted head-dress. What can become of all the ladies' old wardrobes is a point that to this day puzzles me, as every season the fashions vary: all seem to new rig, as by a stroke of a fairy wand, and the discarded garments are never seen again. There is no reforming, remaking, reviving. The freshness of her toilette marks the good taste of the Frenchwoman. Nothing that she once lays aside ever appears in any shape upon any person again; so that what fate they are destined to remains to me an impenetrable mystery.

The rain, which fell plentifully about the middle of the month, although rendering the climate between the showers very agreeable, so cooled the air, that we were often glad to light our cheerful wood-fire in the evening.

The houses are ill adapted for comfort at any season, being full of doors and windows, struck out anywhere, without plan of any sort, at any side or corner, and none of them fitting, so that draughts scudded through every room in all directions, adding to the chill of winter; while in summer the numerous windows admitted the fiery sun so liberally on all sides in succession, that it was nearly impossible to keep the apartment cool, in spite of attention to the closing of the Venetians, for there are no verandas to shade them. Architecture is indeed little understood in the French provinces: staircases are narrow, passages numerous, floors ill laid, few lines straight, no distances regular. The mason-work is very middling; the carpenter-work is very bad; the plumber is unknown. Still the rooms open to company look very pretty, from the polish, and varnish, and gilding, and the mirrors used in their decoration. The shapes, too, of all the cabinet-work were of tasteful design, faulty as was the finishing. In hot weather we were perfectly satisfied; but when the cold weather came—and it is very cold at intervals for several days together all through the winter—our English habits required more protection from its effects than the natives are in the custom of indulging themselves with. The little rug, just big enough to save one pair of feet from the icy feel of the polished floor, attentively placed before the chair of a visitor, was far from sufficient for our luxurious recollections. We bought a carpet to cover all the room; and sheepskins, handsomely dyed, to lay before the doors. We putted up all but one window; we stuffed listing into the crevices; and we placed a large screen between the principal door and the fireplace. Yet all these precautions did not save me from many a shivering; but these shaking fits did not begin till the early part of November. During this month of October we had more frequently heat to complain of; for we were several times quite exhausted by the effects of what is called here the 'Spanish wind'; a dry scorching breeze, which must be something of the nature of the sirocco. It is a real infliction while it lasts, which is fortunately never above a day or two; and it is always followed by refreshing deluges of rain. It is odd that these perpetual changes should have no ill effects upon the health either of the inhabitants or strangers, provided there be no bilious temperaments in question. Bilious patients must avoid Pau, all their symptoms becoming much aggravated in the sedative climate of these plains. For all affections of the throat, and chest, and head, a residence here, resorted to in time, has proved to be an almost certain cure. And yet the differences of temperature are incessant: there is no knowing how to dress or how to sleep for two days together. I folded both a cotton and a woollen blanket at last, and laid them at the foot of my bed, to be drawn up as required; and I had a thin gown and a light shawl, and a thick gown and a warm shawl, which went on in rotation for weeks.

These recurring chills appeared to make no difference in the out-of-door habits of the population. Nothing, indeed, strikes us of the colder north as stranger than the customs of the southern nations in this particular. The people actually live in public. They do not merely sit at their doors, as a lounge of a fine evening; they really do all the work out in the streets which it is possible to avoid doing within. All our neighbours were examples. The wife of a horse-dealer, in the lane at hand, the wives of the hairdresser, the harness-maker, pig-feeder, near us, all sat out on chairs in the middle of the street, day after day, mending their family linen. One of them had on one occasion spread a quantity of maize over a cloth, and laid it all along the pavement to dry, while she sat beside it knitting, near a round stone which a good woman from the country found a convenient resting-place during the operation of putting on her shoes and stockings and her garters, hindered rather than helped by a stout man in a blouse, who stood beside her talking so loud, that, had I understood their patois, I could have re-

peated every word he said. The pig-dealer's wife commonly fed her pets outside the courtyard, fondling them during their meals as kindly as if they had been her children; brushing, scratching, nay, tickling these ugly creatures—for the long-legged, narrow-headed swine of the country are no beauties—often coaxing additional morsels into their huge mouths by means of her caresses! Pork is considered to be very good here, and the hams are very celebrated; so, probably, the lucre of gain influenced this show of affection, gentle treatment being a very remunerating ingredient in the flesh-making process. She had her economical reasons, therefore, for wasting none of it upon her children, who, poor things, received thumps enough to keep one or other of them in tears all day. They were good little things, too, and very pretty: almost all the children in the place were beautiful, so plump, so lively, with their clear dark skins, carmine cheeks, very bright eyes, and caressing manners. But, alas! there is no Infant School to send them to, nor good school of any kind for the lower orders; none that could aid in developing the intellect of really an acute people, except, indeed, one under the care of the Huguenot minister, which is of use to a very small proportion of the inhabitants. The peasantry are therefore quite illiterate, few of them being able even to sign their names: neither of our maids could read or write; their spare time, no small allowance, was usually spent in the yard belonging to our hotel, in company with the other servants of its inmates. Any work they could do in the open air was commonly carried on there. One piece of business all the whole town was extremely particular about—this was the regular refashioning of their delightful mattresses, a ceremony gone through by all householders twice every year. Nobody knows what a good bed is till they have slept on a French mattress; the large square French pillow is very luxurious, but the mattress is perfection. All ranks appeared to possess them of a quality probably varying with the rank of their owners, but all far superior in their degree to any of a corresponding class in our own country. I watched the process of remaking ours with much interest. The ticking, which was of a fine description, was taken off and washed; the stuffing of wool and hair was pulled out well asunder, kept separate, and *teased*, then laid upon a tray of sacking, stretched to a frame set on tressels, and beaten with long rods, a few handfuls at a time, in good earnest by two men in alternate strokes. As the whole town was occupied in the same manner at the same time, the sound of thumping was incessant. There were at least a half-dozen frames going at once in our yard, and noise enough accompanying the business to have drawn a much less inquisitive traveller than myself to a back window. When the stuffing had been sufficiently prepared, the under part of the tick was laid on another frame, and the wool was shook evenly over it till it reached the proper thickness. A layer of hair was then spread over the whole, the upper part of the tick was quilted down upon this, and stitched round the edges, and then what a bed it makes! Underneath this woollen mattress there is generally a sack filled with maize straw, which our maids shook smooth every morning, and renewed very frequently.

I never could succeed in getting our little *bonne* to dust the furniture; I had to take that duty on myself, as I found was the custom generally with the French women of my own rank, who never trust rougher hands with the care of their drawing-rooms. The servants do very little; the poor water-carrier (the help) did all the hard work, scrubbed the pots, cleaned after those above her, and dry-rubbed the polished floors after rather a peculiar manner. The hard scrubbing-brushes used for this purpose were strapped upon her feet, and away she went, thus strangely shod, skating over the floors, sometimes on one foot, sometimes on the other, and then for a whirl or two on both together, in a fashion that was amusing enough to witness, but which took a long time to produce the proper lustre on the boards.

We got on very pleasantly with our assistants, by always preserving our good-humour, making due allowance for their different habits, and not sticking with pertinacity to our own. The servants do not dislike living with the British; we pay them and feed them so well, although in general they are not treated by us with the kind familiarity they are accustomed to. A French *bonne* is, to a certain extent, the companion of her mistress—sitting at work beside her, walking out with her, always spoken to as a humble friend, and always remembered, should any occasion offer of rewarding her faithful service. The domestics are looked on as children of the house, kept in great order, but very affectionately treated. They never seem to presume on this affability—their manners, like their dress, marking their position distinctly. All this of course looks very strange to us.

#### THE BLIND MAN'S GRANDDAUGHTER.

ANY one who has been accustomed to children, cannot fail to have observed how much they are affected by the *tones* in which they are addressed. The words spoken have less power than the sound of the voice which utters them. There is one lady of my acquaintance, a most amiable and excellent person, but towards whom, to this day, I cannot feel cordially; for no other reason, than because I have shadowy recollections of harsh tones in which she used to speak to me when I was a timid, shrinking little girl, whom this energetic lady thought it her duty to try and *rouse*. I had not sense at the time to appreciate her motives; and I dreaded her, though she never appeared at our house without raisins and comfits in her pockets. Children are not such mercenary little beings as is often supposed: her good things never purchased my love, nor removed the nervous feeling caused by her voice. How different was the reception we gave to a poor cousin, who had no bribes to bring, but came with loving smiles and kindly tones, to tell us simple tales from the Bible history, and to join playfully in our childish games! The memory of this contrast, and of many other impressions of early days, combine to make me feel the force of one trait in the character of the model woman drawn by King Lemuel, 'In her tongue is the law of kindness;' and to agree with a more modern authority, that 'Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, shall win my heart.'

As an example of another kind. There was an old gentleman in our town (an Irish town), quite famous for the abuse and the halfpence he spent upon the beggars; and though the poor creatures were philosophical enough to take the one with the other, and to bless 'his honour' abundantly 'for his goodness,' they have been often overheard discussing his merits among themselves, and deciding that, 'though he was a rich man to be sure, he was no gentleman!'

But looks are as powerful as either words or tones. The softest tone in the world counts nothing to the instincts of a child without a corresponding look; and very often the look alone determines his affections. One day I was walking along, little heeding the external world, when my eyes were arrested by a remarkable figure seated upon a door-step. It was that of an old man tolerably well-clad, and almost hidden in a heap of baskets of all sorts and sizes. His hat was off, as if for coolness, and lay on the step beside him; his hair was as white as snow, and waved over his shoulders; and a beard of like colour and length flowed down upon his breast. His head was raised towards the blue bright sky, and a calm smile played upon his worn features. He sat silent and absorbed, as it were drinking in the beauty of that cloudless sky; but as I paused in admiration to think how a poor old countryman could feel thus, I saw that one avenue for the entrance of beauty was closed: the old basketmaker was blind.

There was a little girl not far from the old man, and evidently in his company. She was scantily clothed,

and had neither shoes nor stockings, though that is no sign of great want in Ireland. Her attitude was that of extreme weariness: her elbow rested upon one knee; and supported upon her hand leant a young rosy face, half concealed by long brown locks, that strayed from beneath a white calico cap, whose ugliness could not detract from the little damsel's beauty. But what a strange expression of melancholy and premature thought upon those tender features! I longed to speak, but the silence of the old man and the child controlled me, and I passed on without breaking it. I longed to give the little girl something, she looked so sad and weary. I had no money at the moment; but remembering after a while that I had a biscuit in my pocket, I returned and handed it to her without saying a word. She started, raised herself a little from her seat, lifted up her large liquid eyes towards my face, took what I offered her, and silently resumed her position—all in a second—for I instantly passed on.

A few days afterwards I was walking through a neighbouring street, when I felt my gown pulled gently; I turned round, and was surprised to recognise my little friend, now, I am glad to say, full of smiles. She was out of breath from running, and I asked her whence she had come, and where she had left the old man? I was beginning to frame some question, too, as to *what* she wanted with me, when she evidently feared that I might imagine she was going to beg; and a proud blush mantled in her cheek as she hastened to say, 'I wanted nothing, ma'am, but to thank you for your kindness the other day.'

It was my turn to be ashamed; and I said, 'My dear child, you looked very tired, and I was sorry I had nothing more to give you.'

'Oh, ma'am, thank you. I was tired indeed; but I was not in want—grandfather had money. But I'll tell you, ma'am, what it was, if you'll only wait a minute until I run and tell grandfather where I am, for he is selling baskets at the end of the street.'

Being in a hurry at the moment, I pointed out my house to her, and told her to call there in the evening with her grandfather, as I wanted some strong baskets, and could speak to her then. She came, and I learned her simple history. Her grandfather had been long blind, but had been taught in a benevolent institution the art of basket-weaving, and had supported his family comfortably by his industry. He lived with his widowed daughter, little Norah's mother, in a village several miles from Dublin, and passed his days there peacefully, never venturing into the 'big city,' as Norah called it; for when he had a supply of baskets made, his daughter used to hire a horse and car and take them into Dublin, where she always disposed of them advantageously, and returned with her cart full of edibles and clothing for the little household. Norah was sent to school daily, and caressed by her grandfather and mother. She dreamt of no happier lot, and feared no coming storm, until she reached her eleventh year, and the great blow came—her mother died. Poor little Norah! She could no longer go to school; for the house must have a mistress to sweep it out, to boil the potatoes for the pigs and poultry, to mind the old man, and provide his frugal meals as his daughter had done; and little Norah must be the woman of the house. Thus passed a month or two; but then the old man found his purse growing empty, and as he had a supply of baskets ready for the market, he must go up to town and sell them. Norah must go too to lead him; but she dreaded the journey, and still more a sojourn, however short, in the strange 'big city' her mother used to talk about—associated in her youthful fancy with cars and carriages running over her and her old blind grandfather, and robbers taking from her the produce of the day's sale. 'And then, ma'am,' she added, 'I thought worse of having to go and knock at grand houses, and perhaps to have to speak to grand ladies. I was so afraid of that, that my heart quite sunk in me, and I did not like to tell

grandfather how bad I thought of it all; but I said I was tired, and asked him to sit down and let me rest; and then I thought of my mother, and how she would never come back, and my heart was broke, and I could not stir a step farther; and we sat upon the door-step, and I began to cry—all quite easy, for fear poor grandfather would know. And then, ma'am, I saw a tall lady pass by with a parasol, and I thought, "Yes, they are all *quality* here; I cannot ask them to buy my baskets; they would be angry for my speaking to them." But you turned back, then, ma'am, and came and looked down at me—oh! almost as my mother would look, ma'am, begging your honour's pardon' (she added with a curtsy)—'and then you gave me the cake out of your pocket, and smiled; and from that moment, ma'am, I feel so light somehow about my heart, I don't feel afraid of the quality any more: they are the same flesh and blood as the poor people, and they can have motherly hearts for the poor.' And thus ran on little Norah; and I was glad to hear that her grandfather's expedition to town had been most satisfactory to him as well as to his little girl, and that they meant to return home next day with a good stock of provisions. They promised to call and see me whenever they were in town again; and I have promised the old man (who feels 'not long for this world,' as he says) to take his little granddaughter into my service when she loses his protection.

#### SCIENCE IN MAURITIUS.

It is always gratifying to be able to invite attention to efforts made for the growth of knowledge, the practical application of science to the business of life, or the opening up of hitherto undiscovered resources in nature. We have now before us a volume of the 'Transactions of the Natural History Society of Mauritius,' comprising a period of four years, which enables us to form a tolerable estimate of the progress of science in that remote dependency. The Society numbers about one hundred resident members, and nearly as many foreign and honorary. Shut up in an island about equal in extent to the county of Worcester, they have a comparatively small field of observation; but so much the more reason is there that the work should be effectually done. They are well situated for communication with other parts of the world, and the 'Transactions' show that correspondence with China, India, Europe, and Africa, is actively maintained. The Society has been in existence about twenty years; and with a view to greater usefulness, has recently added 'Arts and Sciences' to its title. The members profess as their primary object the study of natural science, more particularly to the applications which science may render to agriculture and the industrial arts. Under this head are embraced—means for promoting the cultivation of vanilla, silk, tea, sugarcane, &c.; prizes for the best and most prolific samples of rice, maize, manioc, and other vegetable productions, combined with experiments on the use and properties of manures, and the effect of climate. The scheme is a good one, and if well followed up, we have no doubt of the result proving most satisfactory and advantageous.

The vanilla plant, we read, has been introduced and grown in the island with most encouraging success. This production, it is pretty well known, is used to give a flavour to confectionary, liqueurs, and principally chocolate. Mexico exports annually a quantity valued at 40,000 dollars; and its further culture in Mauritius is looked forward to as likely to add an important item to the resources of the island, as a plantation may be raised at comparatively small expense. It is said to be superior to the vanilla of Brazil, which bears a high price in European markets—from seventy to eighty shillings per pound. Some idea of the probable return may be formed from the fact, that one plant at the end of three years will produce 10,000 flowers, and one hundred pods make a pound weight of the vanilla of



commerce. The success of the plant in Mauritius was for some time problematical, so scanty was the produce, when the undue growth of a particular membrane was found to be the cause which had prevented the maturing of flowers into pods. An investigation took place, and the defect was remedied by making an incision at a certain time; and the assistance thus rendered to nature has had the desired effect of multiplying the flowers. It is a little singular that the introduction of the vanilla into Mauritius is of comparatively recent date; although a native of tropical climates, it was unknown in the island until about twenty years ago. In the year 1818, an individual from the neighbouring island of Bourbon, on a visit to Paris, saw a vanilla plant at the Jardin du Roi. Astonished at its growing in so unnatural a climate, he addressed himself to the director of the garden, and ultimately resolved on attempting to introduce it into the colony. Three or four cuttings were taken from the rare exotic, and removed with all due precautions to Bourbon in 1822. Slips from these were afterwards conveyed to Mauritius, where their naturalisation at first appeared to be hopeless. At length, in 1831, after various alternations of failure and success, the first crop of a dozen pods was gathered, and vanilla now forms a staple in the markets of the colony.

The first cherry ever grown on the island appears to have given rise to some extraordinary proceedings. A tree had been introduced and tended with great care by a planter, who watched over it with trembling anxiety during the flowering season: all the fruit, however, failed except one cherry, which gradually ripened and came to perfection. A festival was given in celebration of the event by the delighted planter, and the governor, Sir R. Farquhar, invited to gather the unique and interesting specimen. He arrived punctual to the hour, and at the head of the assembled company approached the tree. The cherry was gone: a young negro, unable to resist the temptation of the red and juicy fruit, had swallowed it. The governor appeased the planter's vexation with the good-humoured remark, that the will would suffice for the deed, and the company consoled themselves for the disappointment by adjourning to the breakfast table.

The climate of Mauritius must be admirably adapted for the culture of silk: the quantity of rain is comparatively small—a fact of much importance in the rearing of silk-worms. The East India Company's establishments have been taken as models for the silk-growing plantations, or 'magnaneries,' as they are locally called. The most important is under the management of a lady, whose father introduced the cultivation of silk. The first plantations were made by the assistance of Indian convicts lent by the government, and a grant of L.100 allowed for a further supply of mulberry-trees. The first supply of silk offered for sale was in 1820, when 750 lbs. of the article in a raw state were brought into the market. Certain untoward circumstances have subsequently tended to check this branch of industry, but the Society is now working in earnest to improve and extend it. We may add, that an annual vote of 10,000 francs is made by the French government as prizes for the best cocoons and mulberry-trees in the island of Bourbon. Experiments undertaken with a view to make the tea-tree productive in Mauritius, were sanctioned by the home government; and a small sum towards defraying the expenses was granted, on condition that seeds should be distributed to all who chose to apply for them, with a view to render the growth of tea general throughout the island. Two Chinese acquainted with the manufacture of tea were brought from Canton, and the first plantation of 5000 square yards has realised every expectation. Samples have been sent to England, and approved as marketable; and the growing and manufacture of tea are considered as so thoroughly established, that the Society unanimously assented to the cessation of the annual grant. Tea now appears in the list of exports from the island.

Among the communications to the Society, is one

describing a process for making sea biscuit to keep for three years without deterioration. It consists in mixing a pulp obtained from yams with dry wheat flour; no water to be used. The biscuit made in this way is said to be of better flavour than sea biscuit generally. Some of it kept for eighteen months had undergone no sensible alteration, and small quantities have been placed in charge of captains of ships bound on long voyages, as the only means of effectually testing the quality. If successful, a profitable branch of industry may here be made available, as yams yield 40,000 lbs. to the acre.

With regard to sugar, it has been shown, by improved machinery, which subjects the canes to a greater amount of pressure than usual in passing through the mill, that the sugar crop may be set down at 8000 lbs. to the acre. The experiments from which this datum is taken were made with canes grown on a rocky soil eleven or twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea. In fact the 'Transactions' of the Mauritius Society furnish sufficient evidence to prove that more depends on the care and attention paid to the canes while growing, and period of cutting, than on the quantity brought to the mill. Among other improvements is a new reverberating furnace, by which the juice is rapidly heated with a very small expenditure of fuel. The quantity of sugar exported from Mauritius to England in 1845 was over 80,000,000 lbs., besides 10,000,000 lbs. to other countries.

The Society has for some time entertained the project of naturalising the salmon in the rivers of the island. A series of instructions have been drawn up, at the suggestion of a member residing at Belfast, as to the best means of transporting salmon spawn, or the young fish, from this country, without injurious oscillation or unequal temperature. It is obvious that the nicest precautions will be required to insure success in a voyage of from ten to twelve weeks. The experiment is an interesting one; but it remains to be seen whether salmon will live in the turbid rivers of an island in the Indian Ocean, or if, after remaining one season, they will ever return.

The great demand for guano as manure induced the chief civil engineer, Lieutenant-colonel Lloyd (the same, we presume, whose name was associated with the enterprising ascent of the Peter Botte mountain in 1832), with some other gentlemen, to make a trip to a group of rocky islets about twenty miles from the coast of Mauritius. So tremendous a surf beats upon these islands, that they can only be visited during what are called the 'hurricane months,' when there are frequent calms; and even then the voyage is perilous, owing to the rapid and uncertain currents running between the reefs. On this occasion the party, who had embarked in a small colonial schooner, were exposed to extreme danger from the springing up of a gale of wind, which raised mountainous breakers in the narrow channels, and were obliged to bear up for Round Island, one of the largest of the group, where they with some difficulty effected a landing, with the stores intended to supply them during the prosecution of their search, while the schooner was forced to run back to Port Louis. The gale increased to a hurricane; the party had no other shelter than that afforded by an old worm-eaten tarpaulin; their water-casks were washed away by the tremendous waves, although the precaution had been taken of rolling them nearly one hundred yards up the steep rocky beach; and they had no water but what was found in holes in the rocks. They were kept prisoners in this way for seven days, when they were taken off, not without risk, by a steamer manned with volunteers from a vessel of war then lying at Mauritius. 'During our forced sojourn,' writes Lieutenant-colonel Lloyd, in his communication to the Society, 'we witnessed from our half-sheltered nooks such a wonderful and impressive scene in the strife of the elements, and the indescribable magnificence of the monstrous waves, beating with overwhelming violence the crum-

bling precipices beneath our very feet, that we never shall forget a sight which but few mortals have had the opportunity of safely enjoying.'

Round Island is described as a most extraordinary geological phenomenon. A mile in length, and somewhat less in breadth, and rising to the height of 1000 feet, it is broken up into caverns, clefts, pinnacles, and overhanging cliffs of calcareous conglomerate, lava, and basalt. During the commencement of the gale, Lieutenant-colonel Lloyd had an opportunity of witnessing a most interesting fact in natural history connected with the habits of the *Phaëton phanicurus*—red-tailed boatwain, or tropic-bird. 'Myriads of these birds,' he writes, 'exist on this island; and to our utter astonishment, what we had only previously remarked to be a most becoming ornament in the tail of these splendid sea-birds, proved to be an essential portion of the beautiful mechanism which nature has afforded them to aid in their swift and varied motions; and that the two slender and delicate feathers of their tail serve them as a rudder or backwater, which, with their feet, they work with the greatest ease and rapidity on either side, to guide them in their evolutions in steering through the air.'

'It was not one, but hundreds, that we saw applying this most extraordinary power; and it was beautiful to observe the suddenness and energy with which they used this simple machine, when, on pursuing their course against the increasing gale, they discovered us behind a jutting rock, and seizing their tail, and placing it almost at right angles to their body, their head outstretched in the opposite direction, they changed their course in the circumference of a few feet, I may almost say a few inches. But for witnessing this fact, I could hardly have credited the appliance of so frail a material to such a purpose; fortunately the corroboration of my friends will not place me in that category with regard to others.'

By the publication of such facts and observations as those we have brought forward, the Mauritius Society is rendering good service to the cause of science and industry. In a scientific point of view, comparatively insignificant things are not without their value. 'Bring me a plant, a leaf, a flower, an insect,' said Linnaeus, 'and you add a new link to the chain of my investigations.' The Society has our cordial wishes for its prosperity, and we trust the sentiment expressed by one of its members will be fully realised: 'that scientific and philosophical inquiries, whilst they exalt the intellectual portion of man's nature, and consequently react on the mass of mankind, also assemble together individuals of different creeds, of different opinions, of different stations of life, in the one peaceful and useful aim of benefiting by their inquiries their fellow-men for generations to come.' In fine, the proceedings of this remote Society, the zeal and success with which its members combat against the difficulties of their situation, might put to shame the communities of more highly-favoured districts at home, among whom it is found almost impossible to establish with any degree of permanency even a book-club or reading-room.

#### A GREAT PRINTING-OFFICE.

We copy from 'Dickinson's Almanack for 1846' an account of his immense printing-office, in Boston:—The office covers an area of 14,283 square feet, embracing fifteen rooms. It is lighted by day by 1664 squares of glass set in 100 different windows; and by night by gas shooting up from 100 different burners. In those premises we have one steam-engine of ten-horse power, three Adam's power presses, two Napier presses, three rotary presses, two Ruggie's job presses, eleven hand presses, two copper-plate presses, two embossing presses, one hydraulic press, four standing presses, one small power press, two paper cutters, three card cutters, one ink-mill, and four machines for shaving stereotype plates, two of which are moved by steam-power. We have more than 400 different styles of types—borders, flowers, and cuts of various sorts; in weight,

30,000 pounds. These are all held in their places by means of 866 type cases, or brass galleys, 200 feet standing galleys, 330 chases, and three bushels of quoins. We have two large cisterns, which contain about 1000 gallons, or upwards of eighteen hogheads of water. This is distributed through every part of the office by means of 500 feet of lead pipe. We use six hogheads of water per day, which, supposing it was brought in buckets, would take one man thirteen and a-half hours each day to furnish, allowing him to bring four gallons every ten minutes. Our various presses threw off in the course of the year, 6,069,480 sheets of paper, or 12,645 reams. Supposing each sheet to be about two and a-half feet long, and that they were placed in one continuous line, they would stretch out to 15,173,700 feet, or nearly 2875 miles, about the distance from here to Europe. It is computed that we have printed the past year 130,240,000 pages of books, 64,000 circulars, 25,000 commercial and lawyers' blanks, 20,000 cheques, 25,000 billets, 500,000 bill-heads, 300,000 shop bills and hand bills, and 2,000,000 of labels. We have cut up, printed, embossed, and sold 1,201,520 cards, or 24,030 packs. Our average consumption of coal is over two tons a week, or more than 100 tons a year. Besides our 100 gas burners, we use about 150 gallons of oil for extra lights and machinery. For our various printing it takes 1200 pounds of ink per annum, besides gold leaf, bronze, and size. In our type and stereotype foundry we have used the past year 50,000 pounds of metal, and turned out 7000 stereotype plates of various sizes and shapes. In our whole establishment we employ usually about 100 hands, and it is safe to conclude that our office affords direct sustenance to at least 500 persons.—*Boston paper*. [In these days of steam-printing there is nothing very wonderful in all this. The great Boston office could be matched in Edinburgh, and many times more than matched in London.]

#### SUPERSTITION IN 1848.

'There is (says the *Worcester Chronicle*) now living at Cradley, near Stourbridge, a woman who professes to have the power of witchcraft. A short time ago she greatly terrified a neighbouring butcher by declaring that, within a given time, he would fall from his horse and break his neck; and such was his credulity, that he gave her 2s. 6d. to induce her to change or remove the spell that hung over him. At the latter end of last week the wretch threw the whole neighbourhood into the greatest consternation by asserting that a large steam-engine boiler would burst at the British Company's Iron-works, Congreaves; the result of which was, that numbers of people residing in the vicinity of the works left the neighbourhood, in order to avoid the destruction which would have resulted from such a catastrophe; and on the same account several persons engaged in the works were induced to absent themselves during the day.' The *Cornwall Gazette* records another instance of ignorant superstition in 1848:—'A farmer in the parish of Bodmin, believing that some ailment of his cattle was the consequence of their being bewitched, has recently attempted, as a remedy, the expedient of killing a chicken, and roasting its heart after sticking it over with pins! The experiment has been so recently adopted, that the enlightened agriculturist is still awaiting the result. Meanwhile he is in doubt as to the proper side, right or left, on which, for his own immunity, and the health of his cattle, he ought to pass when he meets the supposed witch.'

#### HATCHING FISH.

Hatching eggs by artificial heat is well known and extensively practised in China, as is also the hatching of fish. The sale of spawn for this purpose forms an important branch of trade in China. The fishermen collect with care, on the margin and surface of water, all the gelatinous matters that contain spawn of fish, which is then placed in an egg-shell (which has been fresh emptied) through a small hole; which is then stopped, and the shell is then placed under a sitting fowl. In a few days the Chinese break the shell in warm water, warmed by the sun. The young fish are then kept in water until they are large enough to be placed in a pond. This plan in some measure counteracts the great destruction of spawn by troll-nets, which have caused the extinction of many fisheries.—*Medical Times*.

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